(b) and (c) The Government has fixed the duty at the rate of 20 per cent on soda ash taking into account factors such as the domestic demand-supply position, comparative prices of indigenous and imported soda ash and status and composition of the domestic manufacturing and user industries.

Insurance cover for home loans

*63. SHRIMATI GURCHARAN KAUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce compulsory insurance cover for home loans being advanced by the banks; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reason therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) Housing loans upto a limit of Rs.10 lakhs in urban and metropolitan areas and upto Rs. 5 lakhs in rural and semi-urban areas are treated as priority sector advances. As per extant Reserve Bank of India guidelines, under priority sector advances, banks are allowed to waive insurance of assets financed by them upto and exclusive of Rs. 10,000. However, insurance cover in respect of houses financed above Rs.10,000 is compulsory.

Senior citizens' benefit in airlines

*64. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the cases of males and females the age limit for availing of senior citizens' benefit in airlines is 65 and 63 plus respectively;

(b) whether it is also a fact that in the cases of males and females the age limit for availing of senior citizens' benefit in the Indian Railways is 65 and 60 plus respectively;

(c) if so, the reasons for discrimination against the fair sex; and

(d) what steps are being taken to remove the anomaly?